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## **Focus Group One: Turkey**

June 3, 2006

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### **File Details**

Audio Length: 30 minutes

Audio Quality: Good

Comments: Some words were difficult to pick up due to accents. Also speakers are a little tricky to identify at times. The electric power cut off unexpectedly after about 30 minutes and before the focus group discussion was completed.

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### **Start of Transcript:**

- Facilitator: Good morning this is Sally Ashton on June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2006 at Selçuk University in Konya. We are meeting together with English Language Teaching students, first year, to talk about interactive learning. There are ten of us. We will each introduce ourselves before we start discussing questions.
- Female 1: Hello, I am Zümrüt from Turkey.
- Female 2: Hi I am Zafar from Turkey.
- Female 3: This is Tuğba from Selçuk University, I am from Mardin.
- Male 1: Hello I am Şahin Taş from Trabzon.
- Male 3: Hi I am Kassim Sandi from Kenya.
- Male 4: Hi I am Aydın Fidan from Turkey.
- Male 2: Hello my name is Assadullah from Afghanistan.
- Female 4: I am Faika Şanal from Turkey.
- Male 5: I am Mehmet Günaydin from Turkey.
- Female 5: My name is Hatice from Konya.
- Facilitator: Alright, thank you everybody. First of all, we want to talk about what do students gain from group work? You've done group work in our speaking lessons and I'm just wondering, what did you gain?
- Female 1: The group of us has achieved much for example, each student likes his group, he can concentrate on his work and he can enjoy himself.
- Male 1: It may be true but I completely disagree with you because in a group working I think we can't find the main point at once because everybody telling about something. I personally, I prefer working with a partner.

- Female 1: But the success potential increases in the group. For example, if someone doesn't know a subject, the other student can know it and he can help him so success increases thank to group.
- Male 1: But I think group sometimes can be a problem because some student they maybe depend on other students so they become lazy for studying, for searching some different material. So I think sometimes group work is not good. It's better for students to search himself material then to represent himself.
- Male 2: Group work – somebody prefer to be quiet and they try to listening and other people telling something, you know?
- Female 2: I agree with [unclear] and it sucks because some people regards group work as no duty and they think there is always somebody who can take something and they become lazy.
- Male 1: Group working, you can say in a group working you can't find the main point at once because everybody think together and you can't find the main point and the reason immediately.
- Female 3: Personally, I don't want a group work because when I'm in a group work, I always contrast with other people, contrast with their ideas. But I want to say that group work helps people learn many things which you don't know, which you cannot learn from any other source. So I think it's useful to work in a group.
- Female 4: I agree with Tuğba – I gain a new pronunciation of the words and I learn new words from working with a group.
- Male 1: It might be true friends, but I'm afraid I can't join them in this subject because in a group working somebody may be shy and you can't make work them in the group talking.
- Male 3: Yeah, but I think your group work also can make a student become less but if all the students are hard workers I think they can gain something from that. But if some of them are lazy, I think there will be a problem for the group that works. So I'm saying, sometimes if they are hard workers better off working group but if some of them are lazy, it is better to each to work separate.
- Male 1: But I think in a group working, somebody every time speaking and somebody every time being quiet – lazy people.
- Female 3: But you will make them speak – you will make them speak because somebody may be shy but for example in a presentation the students give the equal times for each student. So they all will have to speak so you don't have a chance to not speak.
- Male 1: Yeah but in a group, shy people prefer to be quiet but in a partner working, they have to work – they have to speak.
- Female 3: But they are the same – partner work and the group work.

- Male 1: I don't think like –
- Male 4: Yes, and [unclear] is right in the shame of, the problem of shame but through this problem of shame, the group work is a solution to this problem. Students learn to improve his or her relationship with other friends to solve this problem.
- Male 1: But my friend you have to know that sometimes in group work people they discuss in native language – let's say you're in Turkey, you discuss in Turkish and then you present in English. Something which is [unclear]; so it is better in group work to discuss in English and to present in English as well.
- Facilitator: Okay, thank you for that. Does group working help you to not make any mistakes?
- Male 3: Yes I agree because if all group members are okay, I mean if all the group members are qualified, hard working they have each other. When one member made a mistake, the other members say you made a mistake and they have each other to correct the mistakes.
- Female 4: I think maybe not no mistakes but less mistake because no mistake is impossible I think.
- Male 2: So let's say sometimes, to say maybe is true but when they present, they may find everything – if they are not the hard worker students. If they present, maybe they may find that what they are discussing is true but when they present, they find maybe everything is wrong.
- Male 4: Yes and he's right in that, people don't correct their own mistakes at the first time but as British saying is that, Rome wasn't built in the one day and in the course of the working group in time, certain [schemes] may correct just or always there is some mistakes.
- Male 3: I think he is right – you can't do everything at once. By group work, slowly you see that everyone's pronunciation is improving. They learn better. They teach better, I think.
- Male 1: As I said, in a group working, you can't find the reason immediately and when we make a mistake because the others tell us the truth – vocabulary, for example, because everybody think together about the subject.
- Female 5: I agree with [unclear] about this- she said maybe you can't correct all the mistakes, maybe less of them. But I think in a group work, for once you will learn something from another friend but in the other you have learnt this before so you won't do that and in other group you will have learnt that, you don't do – you won't do this anytime.
- Male 1: But I think there is no chance of not making mistake in a group working.
- Facilitator: What about creativity? Does working with your peers or friends or classmates help

you to be more creative or not?

- Male 2: It helps to be more creative because when you are discussing something, you may not remember everything but when your friend says something, you may take something out of it. Maybe you remember something more, something else, it increases creativity.
- Female 3: I think you are right because in a group work you may not, as you said, you may not remember everything. Then a person said a word, maybe you will remember many things from your memory and you will say many things. But if you learn it in this group maybe she will – I wouldn't remember all this so I wouldn't be useful in this project in the group work. And secondly, I also want to add something, sometimes everyone [unclear], somebody from the group forms an idea and others improve it and sometimes interesting ideas can be improved.
- Male 2: Yes I also agree with you because in a group working you can find new ideas and new thinking about a subject from other friends in a group working.
- Female 5: Also you search from internet or different source, you find pictures and sayings and statistics about your subject. I think this is creative.
- Male 5: What one person will do is limited but when we do something all together. For example, five people – when you are alone you put just one brick, when you are five that makes five bricks. I think that's more creative.
- Female 3: And you can learn a lot of things from each other. You can learn to share your feelings as your knowledge and other advantage of a group. For example, if I'm a person working alone, much time to finish his homework but group work, you can finish your work earlier than the other one working alone.
- Facilitator: So would you say group work, or interactive peer learning, is a kind of multidimensional learning?
- Male 2: Yes, it's much better; it's more multi-dimensional learning kind I think than learning alone I think.
- Facilitator: What kind of dimensions would you say are involved then?
- Male 2: For example, this glass is here. I can see only this part of it but we are a group now and we all can see every part of it. I can see this part, you can see that part and others can see the other parts.
- Female 3: And also I want to add something, In a group work, we always speak and we speak, we discuss, we say our ideas, our feelings and because of this, we call it interactive peer-based learning. You can call this it.
- Male 3: Yeah I think it's true what you say. Because I think even last semester, we have some group work about tourists in Turkey and it was making me to go to Ankara to find some material in Ministry of Tourism. And some of my friend also, they went to Çanakkale. Mr [unclear] here went to Çanakkale to search some material also over there. So you went to Çanakkale, maybe another friend may go to another place so

- I think that is better.
- Female 2: Yeah [unclear] is right.
- Female 3: And also there's another dimension. By group working we can know each other much more and we can share a lot of things because we work together all the time. And I think it enables us to know each other much more.
- Facilitator: So personal relationships as well as developing knowledge?
- Group: Yes.
- Facilitator: What about multiple intelligences? Is that an influence in peer learning?
- Male 4: I don't think that because someone who, if he's intelligent I think or she can remain as intelligent but it is just ideas. He can represent his ideas but the rest of it can remain no more. I don't think it can affect.
- Female 3: Also as we can see, everybody has a different intelligence, different levels of intelligence. And maybe because your intelligence, if you show it, your friend may be attracted from this and he can improve and develop his own intelligence about this subject. And because of this, I think it's also useful about multiple intelligences.
- Facilitator: Anybody else? Okay someone said when doing peer-interactive learning it's very enjoyable because they tell jokes and stories with their friends and this helps them to remember the lesson or the vocabulary or the topic better. Would you agree or disagree?
- Male 2: Of course, absolutely because when you are bored when you study, it decreases your learning. You learn less. But when you are with your friends, for example, I am learning simple present tense – he says, you will put an 's' to the ending but when he says this you will put an 's' to the end. Can you see the difference between this and it's better if you an 's' to the end? Well I couldn't say this as I wanted to say – if you said this with a joke, I think it would be much better.
- Female 2: What different tones -
- Male 2: With different tones and with a joke maybe if you put a snake to the end, something like that but that's not exactly what I -
- Male 1: I'm sorry, I'd say [unclear] because in Turkey, of course in my country, in group working if we start with a joke, it continues with the jokes until the end. So too much joking is not good in group work. Too much of anything is not good.
- Female 4: But when you do work on your own, it's not enjoyable I think. It's like, it's very difficult and you only focus on your work and you want to finish this, only for high grades. But when you do your group work, it's work and homework and also it's enjoyable. You cherish your time.
- Male 2: We can finish them in a short time without any [unclear].

Female 4: When you do in group work?

Male 2: Yes we can do [unclear] in a short time.

Male 3: But I think joking is better in group – it's better to be related with the topic but if joking is out of the topic, it can make you to forget what you are discussing and then you present something wrong.

Male 1: Well it may be true in your country but in my country is not true.

Female 4: No, I agree with this. If it's related to your topic, it makes you to focus on this and you learn many other things too.

Female 2: I think stories or jokes help us learn much more better because another time when you face with the same question or the same situation, you will remember the joke or the story first and then you remember the answer and I think it still helps us to learn better.

Facilitator: Do you want to add anything to that?

Female 1: I think I agree with [unclear] because for example, when I work myself I get bored and then I leave it.

Male 1: I want to say something [unclear] because [unclear] was speaking but then everybody attack me-

Female 4: But don't you think if you speak with jokes, it's more enjoyable-

Male 1: Oh actually I like good jokes.

Facilitator: So everyone agrees joking a little bit – not too much – but a little bit of joking is helpful and telling stories to remember the topics?

Group: Yes.

Male 3: But I think it is better to be related with the topics. The stories must be related-

Facilitator: So it should be related to make memory links to help remember?

Male 3: Yeah I think, yeah.

Facilitator: Okay good, fair enough. Let's talk a little bit about the Turkish educational system. Now people said that mostly in learning you are trained to memorise from primary school and people said this wasn't very effective learning. That, in fact, somebody wrote when they were coming to university they heard in the English department, the teacher gave group work and this caused them to look forward to their education at university. So how does memorising affect your learning as opposed to peer-interactive learning?

Female 3: I think memorisation is the wrong method in learning because teachers give something in the lesson and you learn it, in fact you don't learn it. You just

memorise what the teacher says and what the book contains. So you memorise it until the exam day, you write – the questions are in front of you, you write the answers and after the exam, everything is got out of your mind. You don't remember anything. So what could you learn? It's not a useful method in learning?

Facilitator: And what about the difference, Tuğba, to interactive peer learning?

Female 3: In interactive peer learning you don't memorise; you speak, you learn, you read something and tell your friend. You don't memorise. So everything is in your mind and you can remember this every time – not until the exam day – every day and every part of your life.

Female 1: I think Turkish educational system does not teach us how to think, how to form new ideas, how to develop ourselves and also, it only teaches us how to memorise. And this prevents us from improve our imaginativeness, our creativity and also all the time, we have an exam to pass and we give our whole energy to pass these exams because these exams are so important for our life.

Male 2: We study to pass the exams, not to practice. It should be more practical. We should use our knowledge in our lives. Now we just study to pass the exam. We are studying days, nights; maybe we are studying for years just to, for example, pass the OSS exam.

Male 1: I think the Turkish education is not [unclear] for children or students also and in short, it's not good and as it was said, there are some kind of intelligences that the people have then. We can't find this intelligence in a primary school in children and students and it teach them, that [unclear] that they have the intelligence about it.

Male 3: The Turkish education memorising system sometimes is better for students because whilst you are in the beginning stage, you have to memorise. Once you memorise you can have a good chance to practice. So I think memorise in Turkish system, I think it's very – maybe before when I came here, I find this system I didn't like this. Because most students, they used to memorise in the class. For me, I was not memorising but I came to realise that memorise is better because when you memorise, you'll get more time to apply it by practice. But you cannot practice if you are not memorising. That's how I think.

Female 3: But I want to say that many university students don't do any practice and I think you can see that, especially in English department, many students can't speak English fluently or maybe a little. But they have passed university exam – [unclear] examination. In 100 questions, they made 96, 99 maybe, maybe all of them but they can't speak. So what's this? They all in high school, in primary school, they memorised everything but they didn't do any practice. Only some of them so maybe some of the students liked the speaking, liked practicing. They only did in their own and the other didn't so how will they be teachers?

Male 1: But in Turkish education, everything depends to exams especially university exams.

Male 4: [Unclear] is right in that at the beginning, memorisation could be better but it doesn't end at the beginning. It continues all of our life especially in high school or



secondary school. Unfortunately Turkish education is based on memorisation but thanks to some teachers, we get, they show us how to use tools or get practice usually.

Female 3: I want to add something and also our whole life is surrounded by four or five choices. It's so serious that we can't say the answer if there's no choice. Also, there is a story or a joke about it. A father asks his son, what do you think about the economy? And his son answers, say the choices please. The situation is so serious I think. It was a good story on the subject-I think it's related to the subject.

Male 3: Yeah but I think this memorisation system, me for myself, I think as student in Turkey, as you're a student, you have to cope with system because that's the system. If you're not memorising, which means you are not pass your exam and if you not pass exams this means you are finished.

Female 3: Yes you are right, you are from Kenya but if you were me, you would be really disappointed about this because in high school, in history lesson, in geography lesson and in all of the lessons I memorised everything. I learnt everything and in the exam I did all of the questions maybe except some of them. But now, I don't remember everything. If you asked me and if I answered university now, I think I can't pass because I forgot everything.

Female 1: Is there memorisation system everything? I think maybe in language learning there is a memorisation system but in [audio cut] there isn't any memorisation system.

Female 2: I want to say something about this. In high school once, our teacher asked the questions from the book and book contained about 500 or 1,000 questions and you can be sure about this that I memorised all the questions. Can you believe that? My friends were surprised to learn this but I memorised all the questions and I did all the questions in the exam.

Male 2: But the system isn't the same I think.

Female 2: Everywhere.

Male 4: In high school they showed us mathematics, chemistry, physics but in university-

Female 2: We're only learning English so why did we learn? If we would forget, why did we learn?

Male 3: So but I think we memorise because especially for student if you want to join with the university you have to enter exam. I don't think all system is something like that. So that's exam, you need to memorise. Instead of maybe if you pass your high school exam, on top of that you have to attend that exam in order to join with the university. I think that one can make you also to be creative I think.

Female 3: Maybe they are trying to [attune] our skills [unclear] but I think a better examination system will cure. But maybe because we have many young children, many young youth, because of them they feel obliged to do this exam. Maybe they are right but it is not very useful.

Facilitator: So let me ask you, how often have you experienced peer-based interactive learning? Did you experience it in high school? At university?

Female 3: In high school, in prep classes we seldom experience peer-based interactive learning. In first year in high school, seldom again but the second and third years, we engaged in preparing for the university exam and there's no peer-based interactive-

(Side A finishes)

**End of Transcript**

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## **FILE DETAILS**

*Audio Length:* 70 minutes

*Audio Quality:* Good

*Other Comments:* Some participants very difficult to understand.

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## **START OF TRANSCRIPT**

### **Side A**

- Facilitator: This is Sally Ashton at the Faculty of Education, School of Learning and Professional Studies on 24 September.
- I'll just ask everyone who's here for the focus group meeting to introduce themselves. Say which country you're from and tell us your faculty and ambition for the future, Mandy?
- Mandy: Hello, I'm Mandy [Sha], I'm from Taiwan. My major is nursing. I think that's all.
- Facilitator: That's enough. Ann?
- Ann: My name is Ann, I come from South Korea, not North Korea. My major is nursing as well. I used to work in intensive care unit so it is easy to study but I want to learn all about [injuries] so I decide to study at QUT. I'm happy – I want to learn about Australian nursing system so I decide to study at QUT.
- [Tamika]: Good morning everyone, my name is Tamika, I come from China. Now I'm doing international business at QUT.
- Rose: My name is Rose Lam, I come from Vietnam and my major is nutrition and dietician. I have to study in QUT for four years and

after I've graduated I hope I can go back to my country and open my own clinic. That is my dream.

Facilitator: Good luck.

Kate: Hi my name is Kate, I come from South Korea. I'm studying nursing. After graduating I want to work in charity in urbanisation.

Facilitator: Great, thanks. We're meeting this morning to discuss interactive peer based learned. First question; what is the difference when you are learning English interactively? So all of you are – English is a second language or foreign language speakers. What's the difference when you learn English by speaking to your peers in a group and if you study or learn differently?

Female: I feel that the difficulty is the pronunciation and the accents, especially when I study with the Australian classmates. Because I'm the only international student in my faculty so they speak too quick and they use some slang. It sounds too strange to me. But I didn't ask them to slow down speech because I want to adjust myself so that I can improve my English.

Female: I was shocked when I had presentation week three, no one wanted to be first because we had presentation every week, week three, week eight, nine and ten, but no one wants to be week 3. One of my classmates they want to be first and okay – they're all Aussie girls, when they talk they talk really fast. I'm good at speaking – I'm good at listening because I used to work but they always speak more fast fast speak more faster in the other country – kind of personality or something.

But day after day I just get used to it and then I can talk with them. it just takes time. I see more important thing is understand the cultural background, how they work, how they learn about this. Without any knowledge, any history we couldn't understand properly. So I have to say that it's important to learn history – not only just English but also the background culture ... I think it is important for Australian women.

I'm just curious about why Australian women speak so [fast].

Maybe someone have to research.

Facilitator: Anyone else?

Female: Sometimes ... Australia or our peers to speak very slowly to us otherwise we cannot catch the speaking, this means we cannot participate their group work. So sometimes we can ask them – but not only the classmate, the lecture still speaks very fast so we have to guess. My tutor is an Australian man, he used to work ICUs for 10 years, ICU. I just think he's quite a smart tutor but he has big expectations to his students, lots of knowledge, he's good but he always speak like this, very fast and [unclear] – he can't speak loudly.

Some Australians they can't speak properly, so I have to concentrate, what did he say, what did he say. Also problem ... can't understand properly ... So I think beside a lecture we have the workshop and a tutor. In the faculty we didn't have workshop but we have a tutorial class. In a tutorial class we can discuss what we didn't understand in the lecture and we can talk with classmates.

I heard that my tutor has quite higher expectations about students so that's why he gave some low mark to the students. Every student ... him, but I've no idea about who they are. I think he's good – he can't give higher mark but he's still good, still got good teaching skill. I could understand whenever he talked fast – can't speak slowly but I could understand. It just means sometimes to adjust.

Female: It is easier to understand the lecturer rather than the classmates, because the lecturer have to stand up, pronunciation and they didn't use much slang. But with the classmates, terrible.

Female: I agree there.

Facilitator: If you're doing a group work in class, in tutorial, for example, QCD 210, 211, and we put you into groups. Is it better to speak in groups or is it better to listen to a lecture?

- Female: To me I used to study just listening from lecturer, not discuss with group people. So it is much better to just listen to lecturer. Since when I was young, when I was in primary school, I used to do it like this. It's already difficult to discuss my opinion with peers.
- Female: Yes, it is different.
- Facilitator: Why is that?
- Female: Because it is a different culture of student ... in Korea it's different. Even I know the answer but I cannot talk, okay, it's like this – I know it but I'm just hesitating, afraid to speak out in front of all. Although I know exactly what is the answer I think but a little afraid in front of classmates, in front of the teacher. Okay, did you say something, then I can say ... different teaching style.
- Facilitator: What is the difference in the teaching style here?
- Female: Here we have to always be prepared because teacher will ask questions every time, every time you are in the class. But in Asian countries teacher don't like to ask questions, even they would only ask maybe the smart high schools students in the class ... when they don't ask something, don't expect students to ask questions, they're rude.
- Facilitator: Teachers from your country?
- Female: Yeah until now it has changed a little bit but until now ...
- Female: The education system is getting changed in Korea because when I was in high school the education system is changed. They think we need group discussion. So we tried to have a good discussion in high school but nobody was familiar with group discussion. So we made [unclear] sit there.
- Female: Yes, just sit there just to stare and that is it.
- Facilitator: What happened in China?
- Female: In China students always listen ... and teacher doesn't talk and talk and talk.
- Facilitator: They don't ask questions?

- Female: Sometimes they ask questions that a few people want to give answer, respond them. They don't want to respond teacher's question.
- Female: I think in student's perspective I mean listening to the lecture and put it in a group discussion are important, because listening to the lecture we can get knowledge first. Then when you put us in a group discussion but it would be a very active group so that we can share our experience, our knowledge and this will be the best way for students who study.
- Facilitator: How does active learning make a difference then to learning, as opposed to just sitting and listening to a teacher?
- Female: Sometimes we misunderstand; your classmate or your group member will help you to ...
- Female: Getting to understand.
- Female: makes me work reading lots of books, lots of genres, it makes me to learn more knowledge than just attend lecture by lecturer – I think it's different.
- Female: Because interactive need prepare something ... some knowledge or some background without any preparation we can't involve anything, so I think it is good idea to –
- Female: Have a good discussion.
- Female: Yes.
- Female: Sometimes some student before ask their classmate rather than the lecturer because they're afraid of lecturer.
- Female: Like thinking, how stupid are you, like this. They just afraid of something. Maybe lecturer think so stupid, so silly ... so they just might ask peer group or something. To me teacher is different position, they are different.
- Facilitator: Are you talking about power distance?
- Female: Yes.
- Female: Yes, because the power distance is quite different from Asia – they

make them silent in class or something like that. Because usually teacher is western teacher but student from Asia, so they have some different view that you cause silence or something – cultural differences.

Facilitator: From the teacher speaking from a western point of view?

Female: Yes.

Facilitator: So the students would be quiet because they have different ideas?

Female: Yes.

Facilitator: Can you give an example of that?

Female: Because some graduate teacher or something, don't have much experience about teaching so they just thinking based on their background. My teacher used to blah, blah, okay, keep asking something and get involved with students or something, but they just feel like Asians don't know how to engage the kind of skill, they just [unclear] – how can I answer this question, what can do. It finally caused some silence but most learn some differences. At beginning they start, first day, they just talk, how different western and Asian cultures.

Maybe I could answer ... it is good during first day. Then get increased the question. Then final day they are good at answer question or something. But you need time – not one day, it takes time.

Female: I have experience like this. In my country I lived in the UK for two years and came back to my university in Korean university. Most of the peers younger than me ..one lecturer asked us some questions to students. I didn't know the answers but I was trying to answer, so I answered some answers and he said, what stupid you are –

Female: What? He said like that?

Female: Yes, what stupid you are because he thought the answer was wrong so what a stupid you are...a Korean lecturer...



[People talking at once]

Female: In Korean university, I was really ... because I was trying to involve the lecturer. I loved these kinds of education system in the UK so I won't embark in Korean education system. But the lecturer wanted to extract the answers from students ...

Female: I think sometimes because after questions, because the way the lecturer asks the students make them confused. For example, sometime they ask me, what is culture? But in my country I think culture is culture, why you ask me what is culture? What you expect me to answer?

But I realised that Australian when they ask what is culture mean, they span in a different perspective to look at a culture mean. They expect us to look at the lifestyle, the different food, and a lot of different areas will make different culture. So I think the lecturers should guide us what you expect me to answer? If not we just sit there and silent because I don't know what you want me to answer. The answer is not clear. Because we have a different culture we have different –

Facilitator: So the lecturer or teacher could give some guidelines ...?

Female: Yes, some tips.

Facilitator: ... for the expected answers?

Female: Yes.

Female: Another problem in China is teacher usually buys like teacher always care that good student work hard and usually get high mark and ignore another naughty student. He not bad, he just don't want to work hard.

Female: Yeah.

Female: Yeah, but I heard it was in Australia education system totally different from my country because in Australia government make people all of them average.

Female: Yes, every student hope that attention from teacher – make them higher, higher, but here okay, just care about make them average,

five is good and then they don't care, okay. Just make them average that's all. I think it's not a good idea, they should mix them together or something.

Female: Yes, because some students don't like to go to school, they want to stay home or they skip class.

Female: Is it true in Australia education is just make them medium?

Facilitator: Focus on the middle?

Female: Yes.

Facilitator: Middle students?

Female: Yes. I heard ...

Facilitator: I don't think so.

Female: ... she don't like it in Australia.

Female: I think teachers or lecturers should care every student, don't just focus on –

Facilitator: What about QUTIC, do you think lecturers and tutors just care about the best students?

Female: In Australia I didn't – I don't have this problem –

Female: I think they do care about best student.

Female: No, I don't think so.

[People speaking at once]

Female: One tutor I think have the same problem tutor – she usually mark depend other students who – I can't say, nationality or something, something like that –

Female: I disagree with her –

Female: He or she has some preference some country, some European or something, better than Asian or something.

Female: Are we talking about a tutor ...

Female: I disagree –

[People speaking once]

Female: I think because the best student they care about the result, their study. So that's why they try to have time to meet their tutor. Whenever they have a consultation time they will go. But some students they don't care about their study, so that's why they just ignore it.

Female: How come, how can ...?

Female: Obviously you don't go to consultation, they don't go ...

Female: We pay money and we want to study here. I think we don't spend a lot of time to keep good relationship with tutor. We had time to study information, we've got to study it, improve our knowledge. Why we should pay more attention to talk to tutor don't because we need help – not make her or him happy or something like that. I think we don't need.

Female: The most important thing is you have to make sure your assignment on the right track. If you don't then there's a problem.

Female: Maybe we can because of this problem we make appointment with tutor too discuss about assignment. But sometimes we probably can make appointment with other tutor or other lecturer –

Female: Or supervisor or advisor.

Female: Yes, something like that. I just talk generally.

Female: Some tutor, some lecturer make me feel not good.

Female: Upset you?

Female: Yeah. They don't make me comfortable.

Female: Because one of them they're just watching on the clock, okay, one second, two seconds, okay, already five seconds gone. I have to finish something. They didn't concentrate much, they're busy.

Female: Sometimes it is harsh – they don't say anything ... maybe they need like a checklist when finish some consultation we should give some recommend mark or something. So we could prevent – because we deserve to – they have to concentrate on their

consultation time. But one of them just, you know, going and something – it is not a cost.

Facilitator: You know that QUT has the LEX survey online and you can evaluate the course and the teaching. So it's open for you.

Female: One learning advisor is quite popular but the other one is bad. Which means – the boss, I don't know who is, they should evaluate them.

Facilitator: [Rena's] the boss.

Female: Is she, they should evaluate – no, I mean they should – okay, your course is you're good, and they should give some money more and then the other two, they should little...

If they keep going – it is not a good idea. It is a competitive society, they should change. They not just keep going like this. Just one person is popular but the other is always empty, always empty, which means -

Female: Why, you should put a question there.

Female: In Australia most teachers, most people, ask us why ...[unclear].

Facilitator: Let's get back to interactive peer base learning. Somebody wrote it's like a jigsaw when I work with my partner because they have the missing piece. What do you think about that?

Female: Yeah –

Facilitator: Do you think that's true?

Female: Yes. I wrote this –

Facilitator: Did you write that? I like that.

Female: Yes. I strongly agree with this when I was taking my GE course, one of my [share mates] who is Australian, he told me this. He thinks this is just like a jigsaw, just like husband and wife, they are jigsaw. Group work is a jigsaw. You can have missing part, I can help you a lot.

Female: But if they give us the wrong answer ... I'm afraid to say the peers,

- it's wrong, because I just listen and then I just try how to fake these answers.
- Female: Unless you have an idea to see that it's wrong or right, it's better than nothing.
- Facilitator: Yes, maybe the ability to think critically is an advantage. If your partner or group member gives you a wrong idea, can you evaluate their thinking and say wait a minute, that's not right.
- Female: Some people are stubborn, difficult to persuade him or her to accept your idea. I have experienced –
- Female: Some people have quite good skill, very persuasive – some people say okay, it is true, and they just believe them, the kind of skill communication skill, it is difficult to identify is it right or wrong.
- Female: There is a chance for you develop critical thinking.
- Female: Yes.
- Facilitator: Do you think it's successful – critical thinking?
- Female: I think it is.
- Female: Yeah.
- Facilitator: You don't think so?
- Female: No, no, we should.
- Female: It is essential to development when we have a subgroup discussion or something. Finally we will improve our finer –
- Female: I think group work is good idea. Sometimes there's a problem.
- Female: I like group discussion because we study too many subjects and too many assignments, presentation, etc, so if we have a group discussion we can divide it into small pieces so everybody take one part. So they do it and then we come back, we expand the idea ... it's really good.
- I believe that four people are better than one. We have four.
- Female: Four brains.

Female: Yes.

Facilitator: How does working then with your group help you learn? You said it develops critical thinking, it completes a jigsaw people by supplying a missing piece that maybe you don't have; another student wrote, it completes my deficiencies. What else can you gain from group work?

Female: Based on my experience I have a presentation for faculty speech and I know much about my presentation and asbestos. The others in my tutorial group they all have part time jobs but they weren't prepared.

Facilitator: They were prepared or they weren't?

Female: They were prepared, excellent.

Facilitator: Excellent?

Female: Yes, I was shocked. They worked very hard but they would study and work, study and work. They're well balanced. Because from them I learn a lot better because they can make a balance between work and study, independence. So I learned a lot about them. They look like they just enjoy and playing but inside of them they work very hard..

Facilitator: So you learn more?

Female: Yes.

Facilitator: That's good. Would you agree with that?

Female: Yes.

Female: From my experience we had presentation last week and I think because my group members their contact was really, really excellent but I just provide my ideas. I said maybe we can take a small video to check our audience potential, so we took a video. At the end of our presentation we got six. It was excellent cooperation.

Facilitator: You got six?

Female: We got six.

- Female: I got six too.
- Facilitator: Good work. How did your presentation go?
- Female: Which presentation?
- Facilitator: The one you were talking about?
- Female: Faculty of...
- Facilitator: You don't know?
- Female: Yeah, he didn't tell us, just more than four.
- Female: I think through the group discussion we can build a good relationship with our classmates because there are too many students in one class, over 100. So if we work in groups we have a chance to talk to them and have a relationship.
- Female: Sometimes we will have a problem – you usually go to the same nationality as you in your tutorial group for presentation, is that right?
- Female: Go where?
- Female: Go to the same nationality student. For example, if I were Taiwanese I would –
- Facilitator: Someone from the same country.
- Female: Yes, same country.
- Female: No, because I'm the only international student in the faculty. All of my group members are Australian, I don't have any choice.
- Facilitator: Somebody wrote that working in groups means you're forced to work together, you can't let the other group members fail. Is it true or not?
- Female: It depends on – it's true because we are in a group and everybody wants to get a high mark, so we have to contribute something. So all of the group can achieve the high mark.
- Female: And if I fail that mean you fail too, so I have to work hard.
- Female: Everyone should work hard.

Facilitator: Would you rather do group work or solo, individual?

Female: Depends.

Facilitator: Depends on what?

Female: It depends on your partner.

[People talking at once and laughing]

Facilitator: What's the difference in your partner? If he's handsome?

Female: I want to get that high mark because if they're bad lazy partner...

Female: Yes ... don't want to do anything, so I have to do a lot of work instead of him. But group members are good and some ... so I could learn a lot from someone which is good. It would depend on who worked with me or something like that.

Facilitator: Do you think that each person has a responsibility in the group?

Female: Sure.

Female: Yeah.

Facilitator: Or do you think some students could not do their responsibility?

Female: If someone doesn't want to work it's his problem, a problem we all have.

Female: I had an experience before; we decided every work to everyone, someone said, sorry, I was so busy, I have so much work to do, I couldn't finish, how should I do it? But the due day is tomorrow, what shall we do, we only can help. We only can help him or her to finish their part. So his or her work became our work.

Female: That's not very good.

Female: It's not very good.

Female: Also if we organise our time to meet, some people say I'm sorry, I have work, I'm sorry I have another meeting, so what time we can meet, what time can we discuss? I don't like these kinds of members.

Female: Yes, last minute.



- Facilitator: Another person wrote, for a slow learner like me peer based learning is more effective because it's easier to get feedback than ask questions. So one student who felt they were maybe a little bit slower felt more comfortable working with peers than alone, or talking to the tutor or teacher. What do you think?
- Female: If we ask some questions to peers they do not answer me the same perspective from me. If I ask some questions to tutors it should only be the difficult to understand from my perspective. But if I ask some questions to peers they gonna explain with easy words which I can understand very well.
- Facilitator: So easier language?
- Female: Yeah.
- Female: Yeah, I think is important. Because Asian language has got similar system so we can understand in our perspective. But sometimes we understand the tutor's words where some western people don't understand our meaning. This sometimes happens.
- Female: I had a teacher in EAP class, sometimes we didn't understand something we ask her. She said um, I don't know how to explain, this is the answer. I don't understand, I ask you but you don't know how to explain, so I only can ask my classmates something. They can explain to me another way because they know maybe how do I think so they know how to explain.
- Facilitator: Was it a grammar problem, vocabulary or ... or an IELTS practise test, do you remember what it was?
- Female: Maybe just vocabulary – this happened some time so I don't remember exactly what.
- Female: Grammar, when I ask something to tutors they say, I know, but I don't know how to explain.
- Female: Yeah
- Female: Because they just ... because we learn about okay, some ... number one and number two and number three, this is answer. But they don't know how to explain but they just learn about

spontaneously.

Facilitator: I think one of the problems with English is there are rules, there are a number of rules, but then there are a number of exceptions to each of those rules.

Female: Yes.

Facilitator: It's very difficult to explain the rule and the exceptions.

Female: But we have to learn the rule ...

Female: Before we learn we have to understand. If teacher don't explain we don't know how to learn.

Facilitator: A lot of it you do have to memorise.

Female: Yes.

Facilitator: Somebody else wrote that peer based learning helps them to be more brave about speaking. They said in their country they're not encouraged, a student, to speak – we were talking before about this. So when they have group work with their classmates, lack of power distance, they feel braver to express themselves rather than speaking alone in front of the whole class. Do you think peer based learning makes you more brave?

Female: Sometimes you don't have to talk a lot ...

Female: And the group members will encourage each other and support our ideas.

Facilitator: Group members?

Female: Yes.

Facilitator: That's good support I think.

Female: Group members means when the meeting is small, smaller than lecture, smaller than tutorial it is easy to speak in small groups. It's like talking with friends.

Facilitator: Another person said, in working in groups they have new technique, new ideas on ways to solve the problem. They said this advances their own techniques and they can see wider solutions

they perhaps didn't think of before. What do you think, do you agree with this?

Female: I agree. Because my group members in faculty they didn't even know they can search the information from Proquest. But I told them you can just stay at home and use internet or search for a Proquest, you don't have to go to library and carry so heavy books then go back home.

Facilitator: So you taught them –

Female: I taught them.

Facilitator: About databases?

Female: About that.

Facilitator: They didn't know?

Female: I think they know database, just don't know how to use.

Facilitator: Okay, so you told them?

Female: I told them.

Facilitator: So you gave them better solutions to research?

Female: I think so.

Facilitator: They were Australian?

Female: No, Taiwanese.

Female: Working in the small group we also can share website address. Sometimes other people find a good journal so we can get good information to share with each other.

Female: In my friend's case, she's in Griffith University, she's studying art design, then in her group they should have a presentation but not most of them have to the presenter, just one person can do. And one person should speak English very well, whereas three of them come from South Korea and they involve one Australian. They suggested Australian, okay, you can do some computer work and you just speak.

Female: What a good idea.

- Female: Because the Australian cannot how to do the computer work they can do and then they exchange.
- Female: What a good idea.
- Facilitator: What do you think are the best ways for international students to learn, group work, lecturer –
- Female: Workshop.
- Facilitator: Workshop, what do you think? Interactive learning, online learning, what do you think is the best way?
- Female: I don't think online learning is good for international students – we need to have interactive teaching method and lecturer, group work, because from lecture we have knowledge first and then we discuss with the group. This would be better.
- Female: Yes, we need face to face ... I think is best way.
- Female: Especially international students, they need to contact direct experience rather than indirect experience because they already have plenty of indirect experience. What they need is direct experience, okay, keep talking ... eventually it will provide them with a lot more ... culture and language difference ... just get involved.
- Facilitator: When you're involved how do you feel?
- Female: First time it's a little bit of a challenge but you get used to it and it doesn't matter ...
- Facilitator: When you get involved do you feel motivated?
- Female: Sure.
- Female: It depends on personality, some personalities some people hesitate, some people don't want to talk, but some people are –
- Female: Willing to talk?
- Female: ... they can study more and more, eventually they've got some good mark and they could speak like native it depends on personality. Personality is quite a good influence on studying ...

- Facilitator: Can we talk more about personality, what's the difference?
- Female: When I was a high school student I was frightened to speak anything in front of people, so I didn't speak very much.
- Facilitator: In Korea?
- Female: In Korea. In the university as well. I went to the UK to learn English and in there I just realised ...

**Side B**

- Female: ... if I don't speak any word so I just realised this after this time, I tried to speak something in front of people, whether it is joke or whether it is serious work. The personality is getting changed – I mean more active. Now it's not very difficult to speak in front of people. Personality is very important to learn second language. Sometimes we need to change our personality if they want to speak, increase very well.
- Facilitator: How do you change your personality?
- Female: In Taiwan I usually do my homework before the due day, maybe one day or two, but in here I change a lot I think. I usually do the work before maybe one week or two weeks, and then check it with tutor or English supervisor. Because I think that helps me a lot.
- Female: Just push ourselves.
- Female: Yes.
- Facilitator: So you push yourself more?
- Female: Yeah.
- Female: Yeah.
- Facilitator: What's the reason for that, is it because second language or is it because you're in a new culture and your family is making a sacrifice for you to study?
- Female: Both.
- Facilitator: Both of those?
- Female: ... different because I have to say I'm very introvert person, I'm not

an outgoing person ... I had to work in intensive care unit so I need some assertive skills. I'm always crying, crying, I have to learn a lot of medical, a lot of complicated skill and so on, but I wanted to be [unclear] so when I finished my work I read a lot of books ... a lot about communications. I have lots of knowledge so I learn a lot of skill based on my books. So now I know how to change, what is good, what is pessimistic, optimistic, what is outgoing or something. So based on my knowledge I know how to change or what is good or what is background.

Now I have ... so even my actual personality is extrovert but I could change my personality. I born an extrovert but I could change with my efforts. Everybody can change.

Facilitator: What causes the change, the knowledge?

Female: To adjust the culture – adjust the environment because sometimes in our country they didn't expect us to share our experience, our ideas. But here they want us to express our ideas, our feelings. So sometimes we change our personality.

Female: I remember in our orientation time, Rena told us if you don't say anything in front of your tutor or in front of your friends nobody else ... are you okay with the lecturer. This means we should express our opinion in front of people. It may change us to express our opinion and express our personality ...

Facilitator: So the international experience, coping with a new language and learning new knowledge changes your personality?

Female: Yes.

Female: Yes.

Facilitator: Does group work change you?

Female: A little bit.

Female: It's one of the reasons.

Facilitator: It's one of the reasons?

Female: Yeah.

- Facilitator: How does group work change you then?
- Female: Because we know, we didn't do much, we can't read, cannot involve ... didn't get anything so we have to work hard, we have to get involved.
- Facilitator: So group work makes you work harder?
- Female: Yes.
- Female: Also teach us how to communicate with other people because we're sure to make a positive atmosphere. We can work together ... so we can use some communication skills.
- Facilitator: How do you feel working with people from different cultures?
- Female: Sometimes it is difficult to explain your feeling or your meaning but you will try. So that is a very good point –
- Facilitator: It's good to negotiate those communication skills. How do you feel working in a group of people from all different cultures?
- Female: It's hard the first time but it's really interesting because we learn a lot, we learn about the culture, a different communication way, different study habit a lot.
- Female: Different pronunciation.
- Female: Actually I have to say I don't understand one of my group members who is from Indonesia. Every time she talks I always, yes, yes, yes.

[People speaking at once]

- Female: Sometimes, especially Indian. I could not understand my Indian classmate because the pronunciation is too strange.
- Female: I only understand first the final word.
- Female: The international student suffers from a lot of stress. I think we are stronger than domestic ... I think because life is difficult we may face a lot of difficulty in the future and this peer help us stronger. And if we have difficulty in the future it's easy for us to cope with.
- Female: Because we are international students in a different atmosphere

compared to domestic because we have other language objectives..homesick.

Facilitator: So it makes you stronger?

Female: Yeah.

Facilitator: More resourceful. What about the cultural dynamic, does this make a difference in group work that you might work with someone from the Middle East or someone from Europe, or someone from India?

Female: Yes, the thinking is different, solving a problem is different.

Female: Yes, that's where I have experience. Not in Australia, in the UK, we had a group meeting so I suggested to people come to my home, it is easier to speak. One of the persons who ... is there any guys in your house? Yes, of course – no, I can't go there ... comes from the culture.

Facilitator: That's very interesting. Somebody wrote, lectures are too boring, peer based learning is more fun.

Female: It's true.

Facilitator: So peer based learning helps you think of other ways to solve problems, it gives you insight into other cultural thinking, challenges you to understand different people's viewpoint, but it's fun and less boring than a lecture.

Female: Sometimes.

Female: All the lectures are boring. My faculty subject is Business in Asia, the lecturer Michael is very interesting person.

Female: Is it because of the subject or because of the lecturer?

Female: I think the lecturer controls that – gives a positive atmosphere to learn, yes.

Female: Because some subjects are too difficult. Like I study nutrition and one of my subjects is public health. Even though the lecturer is very, very good, but because the theory ...



- Female: The subject?
- Female: ... the theory is too difficult, so it's boring and sometimes I don't understand. So I just fall asleep when they talk.
- Facilitator: What if they had group work?
- Female: It's fun because sometimes we can match up and we can learn more the classmates – maybe a different way to explain the difficult work. Sometimes I hear some difficult work and I don't understand. I cannot raise my hand and ask her or him what does it mean, no, because they are talking, they are giving a lecture. But with my classmates I can ask what does it mean, can you explain. So I feel interested when I understand what they're talking about.
- Female: Because a lecture is one way communication, workshop is two-way.
- Female: For me tutorials are more helpful than lecture.
- Facilitator: Why is that?
- Female: Because lecture has too many people and sometimes lecture can't focus on small group, therefore you don't understand you can ask.
- Female: Everyone asks a question the lecturer can't finish the class.
- Female: Also that's why some of the students they don't need to go to the lecture because we have a reading book, so we can read at home and go to the tutor if we have any questions, just ask the tutor so we can skip the lecture.
- Facilitator: So you skip the lecture?
- [Everyone speak at once and laughing]
- Female: Because for lecture class we have power point and download.
- Facilitator: You can look at the blackboard.
- Female: Yes, but tutorial class, we can discuss what we learn in lecture what problem you have. It's very helpful. We can escape lecture class.

- Facilitator: But you can't skip tutorial. We will miss and lose out, maybe fail.
- Female: Sometimes tutor says some really important information in tutorial, if we skip tutorial.
- Facilitator: We've been talking about interactive learning, we've been talking about different aspects of it, the challenges of group work, learning different people's ways of solving problems, different dimensions of thinking, cultural aspects, being actively engaged, having fun; finally what do you gain as a student by interactive peer based learning?
- Female: I gain knowledge, the good behaviour and how to cooperate with other people. It is good thing.
- Female: Helps us learning what we have learned in class. Learn how to communicate with each other, how to solving different, difficult situations and helps a lot and study hard cause if I see one of my classmates is better than me I have to study hard.
- Female: I guess different culture have different perspective and thinking, different solution way and we encourage each other, supporting each other to achieve our goal.
- Female: I can learn the way to understand people because if I just suggest my idea and I said my idea is the best, it's not very good so I can learn how to understand people and how to cooperate with people.
- Facilitator: Out of all of those points would you say any one of them is more valuable to you as an English language learner than any other?
- Female: I won't say this because everything has their advantages, so we can't say only say this is good ...
- Facilitator: All of these things?
- Female: Yes.
- Female: Everything has two sides.
- Facilitator: Do you think interactive peer based learning is better for English language learners?
- Female: I think so, yes.

- Female: I think so.
- Facilitator: Why?
- Female: Because it is much easier to share ...
- Female: Because we have poor English some time we can't express very well what we think and what is our opinion. But sometimes we can use body language and ...
- Female: Or ask your group member to explain it.
- Female: Yes.
- Facilitator: Okay. According to you peer based interactive learning is effective?
- Female: Yes.
- Facilitator: For international students more than lectures, more than -?
- Female: Definitely.
- Female: Yes.
- Facilitator: Okay, thank you very much for your participation today. I appreciate you being part of my research. I value your opinions so much, so thank you so much.
- We're still talking, we're back again.
- Female: I think the lecturer or the tutor felt that the students are boring, they keep silent, they didn't answer – not because they don't want to answer, just because they don't know exactly what is the question, what do you want me to answer. So just give the students some tips and some time because they are shy. And because most of the international students come from Asian countries and our culture is too different. So just give the student a little time, encourage them, give them some guide, some tips and they will talk. I think so.
- Facilitator: Personally as a teacher I don't find much difficulty. Sometimes students are a little slow to get started but I think they're thinking and they're processing and once they start there's plenty of talk. A

classroom can be buzzing and I like that.

Female: The student is very intelligent, I think so. They really want to study, that's why they left their home and they come to Australia to study. It's too hard, because we have to cover many stress, homesick ... so just give the student time, they're not stupid and they didn't come here for fun, they came here for study. They want to come here to gain much more knowledge and to achieve their goal.

Female: So they just need time to prepare, time to think about because English is not their first language. Maybe the teacher is thinking ... have to think about because it is not in their own language, it's a second language and they just think about okay, make them sentence first, is it true or not. The second thing is okay, is it right tense or not – the other thing is okay, I'm going to talk and they need somebody first and they come third –

Female: And one important thing to a lot of students is they have to translate from their own language to English. Oh I have this idea and they have to prepare in their own language first and then translate into English. Sometimes when they translate they cannot find the vocabulary, so just give the student time.

Female: One of our tutors she really likes to put us in group but when she gives a time she just sit there and wait ... to discuss with each other. Sometimes we don't even understand the topic so we just use the time to play with each other. Then maybe 5 minutes pass, the tutor ask, okay do you have any answers, they start to discuss with classmate. But we have no answer because we were playing with each other.

Facilitator: Did this happen in our tutorial?

Female: Another tutorial –

Facilitator: What could help you not play with each other?

Female: I think maybe when tutor gives the topic and maybe she can come down to look at it, to see if we understand –

- Facilitator: And listen?
- Female: And listen – if we understand or not. If we understand she can go to another group to ask them.
- Facilitator: Okay, I'll be watching you.
- Female: ... sometimes we can't understand what tutor ask us to do.
- Female: One tutor just gave us into the groups and if she stayed ... her desk and she's doing her work.
- [People speaking at once] ... . I don't like that....
- Facilitator: When you're thinking in English are you translating from your language to English?
- Female: Sometimes ...
- Female: Depends on what question I get ...
- Facilitator: Do you think in your own language or English?
- Female: Think in my own language first if it is difficult and then translate, so it takes times.
- Facilitator: The longer you're here does that time get shorter for translating or not?
- Female: Yes.
- Female: It takes time.
- Female: Shorter.
- Female: The longer I stay here the shorter.
- Facilitator: Does that make you happier?
- Female: Yes.
- Facilitator: Okay, anyone else want to say anything? All right, thanks everybody.

**END OF TRANSCRIPT**

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## **FILE DETAILS**

*Audio Length:* 70 minutes

*Audio Quality:* Good

*Other Comments:* Some participants heavily accented.

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## **START OF TRANSCRIPT**

### **Side A**

Facilitator: This is Sally Ashton at the Faculty of Education, School of Learning and Professional Studies. We are meeting in a focus group today to talk about interactive peer based learning with international students from QUT International College.

Just before we start we'll go around the table, everyone introduce yourself, first name is enough, and say which country you're from and which faculty you're studying with. [Mae], would you start please?

[Ling]: Good afternoon everyone, my name is Ling and I come from Vietnam. I'm doing business – my faculty is business.

[Mae]: Good afternoon everyone, my name is Mae, I come from Vietnam too and I do finance.

[Ming]: I'm [Ming Ting] and I'm from Taiwan. I'm doing IT as well.

Anthony: I'm Anthony, I'm from China and I'm doing law.

Ian: My name is Ian and I'm from South Korea. I'm doing Master of Business.

Ken: Hi everybody, I'm Ken, I come from Taiwan. I'm an IT student.

[Unclear] words are denoted in square brackets and time stamps may be used to indicate their location within the audio.

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- Phossdey: Hi, I'm Phossdey, I come from Cambodia and I'm doing public relations and business [unclear].
- Eliza: Hello everyone, I come from Vietnam, I'm Eliza. I am doing [IMC] in business faculty.
- Eunice: Hi everyone, I'm from Taiwan, my name is Eunice. I'm doing human resource management in business faculty.
- Song: Hello everyone, my name is Song, I come from China and I'm majoring in finance.
- Wang: My name is Wang and I come from Taiwan. My faculty is marketing.
- Facilitator: Thank you everyone and thank you for coming today. First of all just think back on this semester we've just about completed. Most tutorial classes had some interactive activities; you also had experience with working in groups to lead discussion, how did you find interactive learning when you worked with your peers or classmates. What did you think about it?
- Female: Very productive and useful especially in some of your knowledge you get more ideas from the other members, be more wider. And develop your thinking skill, analysing skill more effectively.
- Male: My opinion, I think first of all it's usual to respect your peers and your peers will respect you. You will concentrate when you are talking something ... maybe you should have to learn ahead ...
- Male: Sometimes it depends on people's personality. Some people are extroverted, they are good at doing together but someone is introverted, they just shy, they don't want to talk anymore, personality.
- Female: Some people are friendly and some people are shy because they come from different backgrounds, how they grow up, their families around them. It depends.
- Male: The Asian cooperation I think it's important for people to work with others, it's the best skill, everyone should ask that.

- Male: I have a question: if your peers are pretty shy, whose job is to encourage you, the people who are very shy? Is it the leaders or the others –
- Female: Everyone I think.
- Male: But I think the leaders should start to encourage everyone. So first the leader should break the ice, so make everyone start to talk, and then maybe people will be more willing to share ideas.
- Facilitator: Who's the leader, how do you determine who is the leader?
- Male: Usually ...
- Female: Someone who is ...
- [People laughing and speaking at once]
- Female: He or she is more active ... he or she will be the leader.
- Facilitator: So active in organising or active in speaking?
- Male: Speaking.
- Female: Speaking.
- Facilitator: So a more active speaker automatically becomes the leader?
- Female: Yes.
- Female: I don't think so, I think also needs to be nice to controlling the meeting.
- Female: But the problem is who ... him or her. In this group discussion who's going to say I'm the leader, and do you think that everyone will accept that?
- Female: They volunteer.
- Female: Yes.
- Female: So he or she must be a bit tough, brave enough to volunteer to do that job.
- Male: Somebody must jump out and talk to others.
- Female: Sometimes, because sometimes people are shy to do that job, to volunteer.



- Female: I think the cultural difference ... because in my country in the class the student is there to ... debate on discussion, they learn context ... they like writing, they don't want to talk.
- Female: Because they've never been told to speak out.
- Male: Yes.
- (Many agree)
- Female: Yes, it's where I come from.
- Female: Because of the culture.
- Male: I think most of the Asian cultures are like this.
- Female: They respect the teacher, no challenges to the teacher, they just listen to the teacher.
- Male: Yes, don't challenge the teacher.
- Male: You just speak, ask how to do then just do it.
- Male: So you know why we don't challenge you.
- Male: In Asian is high powered distance culture ...
- Male: Yes, kind of hierarchy –
- Facilitator: Hierarchical?
- Male: Yes.
- Facilitator: Does this cause you to have difficulty in adjusting to the educational system in Australia because we expect group work, we expect interactive students, we expect students to be active and speak in class?
- Female: Yes.
- Male: Yes.
- Facilitator: How do you adjust to this?
- Male: We continue learning –
- Facilitator: You're learning?
- Male: Yes.

- Female: It was very hard the first time because it was new, we hadn't seen them before. But seeing we are already here we have to learn and push ourselves – some difficulty at the same time.
- Female: Sometimes it problem for international students – how to understand –
- Male: Sometimes people who can speak well, if you are shy to speak out, it is very embarrassing if they said it wrong. For me I'm just pretty talkative. Living in Australia okay to just –
- Female: The more you speak out the more you have a better ...
- Male: Just keep talking....
- Facilitator: How do you get confidence to speak if you're not used to it? if you're previous educational background is considered rude or high powered distance, how do you get used to speaking out?
- Male: Start with short answer, respond to teacher, short answer first ...
- Female: In my experience before I went away I was ... and I didn't talk much to the native speakers because afraid that if I talk to them maybe I will get some mistake in my English. Later on when I came here I figure that if the more I talk to them, the more I feel more confidence. So the students should talk to the others more.
- Male: I had a pretty similar experience in my previous school. They give you a test before you enter the school.
- Facilitator: Is that in Australia?
- Male: In Singapore, that's a Canadian system school. So they give you a test to identify your English level and they put those guys in the class. Those people in your class have the same level of English. If you speak wrong or you have bad grammar and everything, they don't really know. So nobody is going to laugh at you ...
- Female: So they don't really know which right or wrong.
- Male: Actually a lot of the time people are improving their English very fast. We take four classes in the one semester – two English learning, but others are mainstream – we've got to practise. First

- you talk to people who have English same level as you so you can be more brave, have more courage.
- Female: Confidence.
- Male: Yes, confidence so we can talk to those mainstream people and you feel free.
- Female: What's the difference when you learn English interactively, is there a difference?
- Female: Sure.
- Facilitator: What is it?
- Female: Noisy and silent.
- Facilitator: Nosy and silent.
- Female: Yes.
- Facilitator: How does it compare with how you learn; how did you learn English in your country?
- Male: Reading from the text.
- Male: Textbook.
- Male: Yes, this is a book everybody reads.
- Facilitator: Is this an effective way to learn English?
- Male: No, of course not.
- Facilitator: Why not?
- Male: Because I've heard one joke ... like some western guy in Taiwan ask a student saying how can I get to the subway, and the guy just respond – same as the other textbook – okay, you go straight, you turn left, then right. He just say the same way. Because they don't know how to apply –
- Female: To the real life.
- Male: Yes, to the real life.
- Facilitator: So Practical English?

- Male: Yes.
- Facilitator: When you learn interactively how does it make you feel, do you feel like you learn more or not?
- Female: More, more.
- Facilitator: How?
- Female: Practising it.
- Facilitator: Practising it and speaking it?
- Female: You're faced with the fact like before, we just study in the books. We heard about the culture, about the native speakers, but now we can [face] with them so it's different.
- Female: You can discuss and you can sometimes more understand.
- Facilitator: More understanding. Any other idea?
- Female: I think if we have a good discussion because we have many nationality students to get into a group so I think it's another problem. Because if we speak less language we will speak our mother language. But we have to talk to other nationalities, we have to speak English. This group discussion is very tricky; we can speak our language and then speak English.
- Female: Like the group discussion ... you can't understand, what's wrong with the English. Because we are group I can speak Mandarin, so with several different nationalities make it good for us.
- Male: I think it's because if you know this person and if you know they you can speak the same language as you ... just real strange when you talk English. You might think people are saying, okay, this guy you're showing off more of your English level –
- Facilitator: But you came here to study English, didn't you?
- Male: Sometimes you just feel this way.
- Facilitator: Do you feel that way?
- Male: Most people.
- Male: So if some Chinese ... person speak English to me, I'm thinking

- okay, how do you speak English with me, strange.
- Male: [Inaudible]
- Male: Yes, you can just speak Chinese with me, what's the point, you want to show off?
- Female: I think you should ... with students who talk their mother language.
- Facilitator: Say that again please.
- Female: You should have applies with the students who talk the mother language ...
- Female: [Inaudible]
- Facilitator: This is university atmosphere, not primary school –
- Female: We got used to it, a kind of a background. We don't do something that we're not forced to do.
- Facilitator: So teachers should have a big stick?
- Male: Yeah they use it.
- Facilitator: ... your country?
- Male: Yes.
- Female: Yes.
- Male: Yes, of course, since I was in primary school all the way up to high school.
- Facilitator: Why did they beat you?
- Female: If you didn't get –
- Male: [Extend] our mark. Test marks like 95, so if you get 90 you need five more marks – so they just hit you five times.
- Male: Corporal punishment, it's normal for us.
- Facilitator: Has everyone experienced this?
- Male: Yes.
- Female: Yes.
- Male: Korea as well.

- Facilitator: Korea too?
- Male: Yes.
- Facilitator: Anthony, did you have this -?
- Anthony: No, no such experience in China.
- Male: And your parents beat you as well, they beat you first then you go home and show them the test result, you get another beating.
- Female: Sometimes.
- Male: Yes. Or maybe you show your mother first and the father comes back, show it to your father – another one.
- Male: And how about grandparents.
- Facilitator: Oh dear. So what happens in Korea?
- Male: Actually we have one kind of social ... it is the same level the teacher and parents. So when student gets some corporal punishment they got it by a parent. Actually we accept the corporal punishment. Sometimes we worry about where the challenges are with teacher –
- Male: Yes, you get beat up.
- Facilitator: You're afraid I'm going to beat you up ...
- Male: Not beat up but you can get a stick and –
- Facilitator: No, there's no sticks.
- Male: I know in many western countries –
- Male: That's why automatically we set a hierarchic position, who has the more power than the teacher has.
- Male: Sometimes the teacher will call your parents, can that be your kid, not problem, please beat it. No pain, no gain.
- Facilitator: Is that what your parents said –
- Male: No, parents just allow them, they don't beat you for no reason because you get a low mark, so they can kick you so you gain because no pain, no gain.

- Female: The experience ... would you do that to your kids?
- Female: No.
- Female: [Inaudible]
- Male: Senior primary school –
- Female: [Inaudible]
- Male: In your tuition you didn't get up to after school tuition -?
- Female: Cram school.
- Male: Yeah, and they beat you as well, all the time.
- Female: Even more.
- Male: Yes, more, much more.
- Facilitator: In cram school they beat you more?
- Female: Yes, because the teachers don't – you come here and you have to get high mark, so they are more strict.
- Male: They've got a wooden sort of stick. They took it from a little chair –
- Female: Chair.
- Male: ... you got [16 year math, maybe 30 beat up].
- Female: Did you get?
- Male: Yes, of course. When I go home my hands are all red and ears all black. Because I write my – what is this?
- Female: Thumb.
- Male: Thumb, yes, so here is all bruised.
- Facilitator: How do you readjust then from that background in an education of being beaten to Australian system where there's no stick, no teacher hitting you?
- Female: I think because you come here, you pay money for studying. If you don't want to study you lose your money, just waste your money.
- Facilitator: So when you come here to have a duty to study?

- Female: Yes.
- Male: Yes.
- Facilitator: And be successful?
- Female: Yes.
- Facilitator: Do you agree with that?
- Female: Yes.
- Facilitator: What about the students who don't go to class, who don't go to lectures, don't go to tutorials, what about those students?
- Male: Parents force their kids finish university, it's our standard.
- Facilitator: But parents are far away ...?
- Male: But it shows on your report card.
- Male: If they can get a good result it's up to them.
- Facilitator: It's up to them?
- Male: Yes.
- Male: But you need to get a certificate. If you don't they know.
- Male: Your parents would be there –
- Female: ... over 80% attendance –
- Facilitator: What about the teaching style here?
- Male: In Korea the teacher lead to the students how to do this assignment, how to do this assessment, the teacher should taught everything. But in those systems the teacher just they suppose students autonomous.
- Facilitator: So students can choose?
- Male: Yes.
- Facilitator: What do you think about that?
- Female: I think Australian life the student has more free. The teacher encourage them to learn that experience and they are by themselves. But in Asian style I think the teacher will be bad they



can give us other then we go and find that. Go to class, sitting down and later we write on the board and we have to write down.

Facilitator: Just copy?

Female: Yes.

Male: Yes.

Facilitator: Then how do you do assessments, memorise? Do you have to do critical thinking?

[People speaking at once] ....No...no...

Facilitator: No critical thinking?

Male: No.

Female: ... for student critical thinking –

Facilitator: [Inaudible]

Female: Yes, they write their essay and to show the issue – remember the teacher told us the knowledge is from the book, I can't think by myself.

Female: Just follow the book.

Male: Yes.

Facilitator: So this is really a change in thinking style when you come to this education, isn't it?

Male: Yes.

Facilitator: Do you have difficulty with adjusting, is it better, worse, how would you compare?

Female: Better that I have to be more than I used to – idea increasing.

Facilitator: So more ideas?

Female: Yes.

Facilitator: Okay, anyone else have a comment?

Male: In my opinion things are [unclear] in Taiwan for master education is very different. Australia ... master student, you should read some magazine or books ... use so many thinking, in your opinion

... research assignment. However in Taiwan if you are master student ... in two ways, one way you should do questionnaire, surveys, analyse and you look at the result and you analyse. Another way, you have a meeting with some parts of coordinator in business and you find some special interviews on your opinions.

Female: Interview him.

Male: Yes, interview him. I think it is very different.

Male: I think there is one more way; you beg your professor for a pass.

Facilitator: Can you do that in Taiwan?

Male: Yes, if you have a passing mark of 60 and you get 58, you can beg him. Sometimes they pass you.

Male: Yes, sometimes this works in China.

Facilitator: Do you offer money or presents?

Male: No, just persuade him.

Male: Yes, you beg him – put your knees down.

Facilitator: Get on your knees?

Male: Maybe – we do everything.

Female: We do everything.

Facilitator: What was your question?

Female: Is that activity to your lecturer to get higher marks, is that called corruption?

Female: Corruption, no, not really, but we have other words – you know that person so you help each other so it's not really corruption. But there are other people they can do that too, but not them – give opportunities to the person you know. But they both have the same quality or qualification – so not corruption.

Female: Corruption used just for government?

Female: No, even in school.

Female: Corruption is you get from the others for –

- Facilitator: For something you want.
- Female: Yes.
- Facilitator: Like a favour or bribery.
- Female: From the public.
- Facilitator: I just want to go back to this difference in Australia, Taiwan or whichever country. To do a masters degree you have to do more research in Taiwan or more research here?
- Male: You mean the research look for different reference. I think different really.
- Facilitator: What's the difference?
- Male: I think ... the university, Chinese students you should have critical thinking to find which is reference is correct, which is incorrect. In Taiwan you should use your idea and to decide something. This is different.
- Facilitator: Is it the same thing or different?
- Male: I think I got ... like here you do research and you identify if this is wrong or this is correct, which is what you want, and then just use your own mind.
- [People speaking at once]
- Facilitator: What's that?
- Female: Here they have two kinds – first is master of research and the second is master of coursework. Master of coursework you just follow the courses.
- Facilitator: The courses?
- Female: Yes, the study of the course. In master of research you must do your research.
- Female: Different but it's still different in our country. We still use our own ... [inaudible]. I don't have to study about the other people's idea or other people's research ...
- Facilitator: So you don't have to reference or support or find evidence?

- Female: No, not really.
- Male: Sometimes you need-
- Facilitator: Sometimes.
- Male: You should find some crucial point, use that for example, to support it, by some survey or your interviews of some people ...
- Male: Would that be similar to Australian ...
- Facilitator: It sounds like it is.
- Female: But we don't really care how you reference it ...
- Male: ... difference, you don't care about how many reference you should have in Taiwan. You could have several references, it's okay, because you use statistics to improve, you are right.
- Facilitator: So it's more scientific based?
- Male: Yes ...
- Facilitator: Okay. Somebody said that interactive learning provides more creative thinking, what do you think about that? When you work with your peers or your classmates it's more creative thinking.
- Male: Depends.
- Male: No, I don't think ...
- Female: They ask you to keep your opinions. So if you don't like reading or ...
- Female: Yes, so once you speak it out – what's next, you have more ideas once you speak out but once you don't speak out just keep it in your mind. You can't find the other ideas ... of core problem.
- Facilitator: When you work with peers you get more out of – added to your idea?
- Female: Yes.
- Male: Yes.
- Facilitator: So in that way it could be creative thinking, couldn't it?
- Female: Yes.

- Facilitator: Okay. Somebody else said that when you're working in groups or with partners it's like a jigsaw and the pieces fit together like a puzzle.
- Male: Sometimes you have like some members don't do anything, but others still finish everything for you ... most Asian students. Sometimes they don't care if their members don't do anything, they won't tell the teacher they just miss the part. But western students they 100% are going to tell professor.
- Male: Maybe they are not willing to do the group discussion or the group work.
- Facilitator: How do teachers change that, how could that be changed from happening? How could we make a difference for people who don't contribute?
- Male: You say we are going to lower your mark, kids get a break.
- Female: Even have a group discussion but everyone, each member in the group should have their own report so that ...
- Male: Individual?
- Female: Yes, individual report.
- Facilitator: So individual responsibilities for particular reports or parts?
- Female: Yes.
- Male: They still do everything and they say, okay this guy, even though she has done nothing, we still say okay she has done point one and she has done point 2 but actually I did it all.
- Female: I think the other way is encouragement, it's better than to set the rule. Because there is rule ... but when there's no rule they won't contribute. So better find a way to encourage them to participate, every time they are in the group, not just in that class. Show them that it's enjoy, it's fun contribution is really good and effective – not just for this class but for the other times in their life.
- Female: But it is most difficult.
- Female: Yes, but it's for a long time research, I know it's hard but it's for a

long time.

Male: I think it's probably ...

Female: I don't think so. If the assignment this morning is now due at 9 a.m., will you come at 9 a.m?

Male: No.

Female: [Inaudible]

Female: I think in the school, in the class, always we have a rule to make everyone obey them. Like in here and in Singapore ... here and in Singapore the countries are clean but the difference is that the people in Korea ... in Singapore they control the garbage – but people will clean up after. But here everyone doesn't have to clean up but they can do their own part by not throwing the garbage. The people, the whole people in Singapore if you throw garbage you will get fined.

Male: They were not that much, police was looking at you.

Female: In a public place it is quite dangerous.

Facilitator: Somebody said group work forces people to work together because you can't let your group members fail. So you're saying that some people don't do anything and group members cover up for them?

Female: Yes.

Male: Yes.

Facilitator: So this is true then?

Female: Yes.

Male: Yes.

Female: When we have to mark other group members and we used to give them high mark because –

Male: We still mark them as they are doing level seven.

Female: Yes.

- Facilitator: Why do you do this?
- Female: Because my partner told me –
- Facilitator: You're partner told you?
- Female: No, no, we think if we can get them higher mark they won't prepare the final exam so hard.
- Male: Or I think the Asian people tend to consider the other's opinion.
- Facilitator: They consider the ...?
- Male: The other's opinions. Why don't you do that, you should do, and after that ...
- Facilitator: When you talk about – do you understand what he means?
- Male: No.
- Female: No.
- Male: For example, Korean people – sometimes I want to do some particular habit, this is not our custom's habit, we cannot do that even though I really want to do this ... so that's what I think, Asian people, actually Korean people ...
- Male: I think he means people consider more about what people think about you. So you don't want other people – things like, okay, this guy is very mean and he make me fail and I hate this guy. So we don't want this to be happening.
- Facilitator: So saving face?
- Male: Yes.
- Male: Kind of, yeah.
- Male: We don't want to be hated by others.
- Facilitator: You want to keep the group relationship?
- Male: Yes, everything is just a little favour of saying they've done most work. We are the ones who did it, so actually we know how to do it. In the final exam we don't lose anything and if they fail it's their business – but here just help them.

- Facilitator: It's interesting, because when the final exam comes you may have to reproduce that product; a letter, a genre, a style of writing, and if you didn't do it in the group work you don't know for the exam. So the person who did all the work in the group work can be more successful not only in the group work but also in the exam.
- Male: Yes, that's why they don't have to worry that much about, because in the end you compete you are going to lose, in this stage I can just help you. So if it goes to the end he doesn't know how to write it.
- Female: Must be more relationship effort?
- Facilitator: Better relationship?
- Male: If you fail the final exam that's not my business. But if I make you fail in this assignment that's my business.
- Facilitator: In the group work?
- Male: Yes, so we wouldn't do that.
- Facilitator: I thought we were saying that group work was good, but it seems like we're saying now it's –
- Male: Of course there are pros and cons. Of course there are good points but sometimes –
- Facilitator: But that's a negative point, isn't it?
- Male: Yes.
- Male: I think in that situation ... more in Australia, in our country it's more open.
- Facilitator: Do you have group work, pair work in your own country?
- Female: Yes.
- Male: Yes.
- Facilitator: So it's not strange to do it?
- Male: And it's not strange about somebody who did it all. Of course there's always somebody who will finish all the work ...



Facilitator: Are you talking about yourself?

Male: I'm not the lazy one.

Facilitator: So you're saying be careful who your group members are?

Male: Yes, but usually people just find their friends and their friends are always the lazy ones.

Female: I think first of all we should divide the works for every member in the groups so that everyone can take part, take on the role ...

Male: That's normally the procedure but if it goes to the end you realise this guy won't do anything, you say I don't want to fail this because of him, so you will do it.

Female: Yes, that's right.

Male: But even though you divide the work with him, he's not going to do it.

Facilitator: Okay, but what if we take the example of the discussion leading, everyone has to lead their own discussion. So if you do all the work from somebody else how can they be successful?

Male: I think they just recite ...

Facilitator: Recite? Is reciting discussion leading?

Male: They can do that.

Male: The leader must do the job.

Facilitator: You have to do the job right?

Male: Yes.

Facilitator: You have to know your script I think.

Male: Some people write script for you.

Male: ... all things –

Male: They write script for you to read.

Male: Can you write for me?

Female: We have different topics.

Male: Yes.

[People speaking at once]

Female: I think we would know ... in the class. We have discussion.

Female: I feel free to do it for others.

Female: No, you have to do it.

Female: So now you learn how to don't do.

Facilitator: I'm still trying to get to the idea of group work. You said it was good at first, then you said it's problematic because of some people who don't do their work and you were forced to do it for them. But what do you gain from group work, we've said about ideas, if you have an idea your friends add more –

Male: Yes, you get more friends.

Facilitator: More dimensions or more ideas from your idea, what else do you gain from group work, do you gain more than you lose or do you lose?

Male: You get to know each other.

Facilitator: So relationships.

Male: Yes.

Facilitator: What else, ideas, relationships.

Female: And how to help each other.

Male: Cooperation.

Female: Team work.

Female: More understanding.

Facilitator: More understanding, okay, let's unpack understanding. How do your friends help you understand?

Female: Sometimes I have experience that before I did the presentation my friends ... the group, but we have a different idea so lastly we devise first part to last part because no one agree with each other.

Male: Sometimes I prefer to do it solo.

- Female: In my experience I learn from the other people and then I integrate my style ... so that we can cooperate well. It's from two sources, not only one so it works better.
- Facilitator: So it's better because it's more –
- Male: You always can learn something from others.
- Facilitator: When you're working with others does it help you remember better?
- Female: Yes.
- Male: Yes.
- Facilitator: Why?
- Female: Because I have to speak twice, or more than two times so that I can remember. You know when you talk a lot you can remember ...
- Female: And thinking about the problem, discuss ... it make me remember.
- Facilitator: So when you discuss it makes you remember?
- Female: Yes, because we had to think more about the problem, the issue, before we talk.
- Facilitator: That seems like an advantage, do you think it is?
- Male: Yes.
- Female: Yes.
- Facilitator: How does group work help you to reflect and think about learning?
- Female: When we discuss this topic the people get different ideas so a good way for us to memorise ideas may be better for the group work.
- Female: Compare your ideas and the other people ideas and you see which one is better.
- Male: Different backgrounds so people they have different thinking.
- Facilitator: Different culture, yes.
- Male: Yes.

- Facilitator: Who did you notice the most difference with?
- Female: What do you mean?
- Facilitator: Like different cultures, if you're in a group which culture has the biggest difference?
- Female: Muslim people.
- Male: Muslims.
- Female: Even how they say yes, they would say – hand like this, it means yes, not no.
- Female: Demonstration.
- Female: When you say yes how do you nod your head?
- Male: [Inaudible]
- Female: I met Indian friends but he said yes ...
- Facilitator: So is culture a good part of group work, working with other cultures?
- Male: Sometimes yes.
- Female: It depends on the topic ... too difference, don't be different.
- Facilitator: Don't be different, what do you mean?
- Female: I mean too much difference like Vietnamese and Chinese can be core groups but Vietnamese and Muslim is quite hard.
- Female: You mean the distance?
- Female: Yeah, the distance – the distinctions.
- Facilitator: The distinctions?
- Female: Yes.
- Facilitator: The cultural distinctions?
- Female: Yes, between two countries.
- Female: Yes, I think Chinese, Vietnamese, Taiwanese, Koreans are similar, their cultures, their regions.
- Male: North-east Asians and South Asians are pretty different – in some

- cases.
- Female: Different culture we have different behaviour.
- Facilitator: Well we've been learning about that this semester, haven't we?  
Do you think so Kim?
- Kim: Yeah, some things – different culture will have a different ideology but not all. Like United Kingdom and Australia, actually the two countries is come from the same culture. Both are England culture. But the Australian culture and the England culture now are very different.
- Facilitator: Very different, yes.
- Kim: Yes, and Taiwan and China, actually we have the same culture, we have Confucious culture. We learn ... and Chinese culture – no, Chinese and Taiwanese our ideology and our political and our economics – is very different. So same culture will cause with different parts ...
- Male: Even the same origin still –
- Female: Has a difference between those countries.
- Male: Yes. Korea has north and south, totally different.
- Facilitator: But they're coming together. I mean America came from England and now are very different.
- Male: Canada as well.
- Facilitator: So is culture a good aspect of group work?
- Male: Yes, I think it's pretty interesting.
- Female: Yes, also ... to adapt.
- Facilitator: How can QUT make better group learning?
- Female: More consultation.
- Facilitator: Yes – more consultation – that's with the tutor, isn't it?
- Female: They have to learn how to, it's new for them,, only way for them.  
Get them used to -

Facilitator: How can we get you used to group work?

Female: More activities with each other.

Facilitator: More activities outside of class?

Female: It can be both.

Facilitator: But many students are busy.

Male: It can be inside the class but not those academic workings, sharing is better.

Female: Having more fun.

Male: If it's sharing we are allowed to talk with each other, if it's academic –

Male: Just like English club – just chatting with each other, that can improve a lot.

Facilitator: Okay, will you chat with other people from Muslim countries or would you just chat to people from your country?

Male: Not your country but countries that look similar to us. So north-east Asians, China, Korea, Japan –

Male: Thailand maybe.

Facilitator: What about Europeans, what about Middle Easterners, what about South Americans?

Male: South Americans are all right but Middle East is pretty different.

Female: So it depends on your interest.

Male: Yes, high interest.

Facilitator: And your faculty?

Male: Not faculty.

Female: Even in faculty I tried to speak to white people, Australian people, wherever they're from, just tried to learn from them different cultures because people from Indonesia, from Germany, from France ... even they look the same to Australian people but they have a different background. So the way they learn also different,

the way they speak, the way they communicate, the way they express – so you learn from them.

Facilitator: How do they respond to you?

Female: Some people are friendly and they understand what I try to tell them. But some people seem like they don't [get by me]. Especially Australian people, they don't think that I can't speak English properly, they don't really know how to encourage my speaking.

Male: They are not used to other accents. Some Australians, strong accents –

Female: ... accents.

Male: Yeah, good day today.

Facilitator: They have longer vowels.

Female: Yes.

Male: Now you make up.

Facilitator: When I go home to America they say, Sally your vowels are getting longer, so I was slowly changing.

Female: Why should you change?

Facilitator: Why should I?

Female: Yeah ...

Facilitator: An Australian said to me, you've been here for 20 years but you still sound like an American.

Female: Is it something that ...

Male: Sometimes people don't like Americans, I think Canadians don't really like Americans.

Facilitator: This is the accent we're talking about. Does anybody have any problems in their faculty, feeling accepted or anything, do you have ...

Female: Yes.

- Facilitator: Do you, what is it?
- Female: Because I'm a little bit too young for them, because all of them are working and I haven't experienced that, so they have more knowledge than I have in the work field. So sometimes I ask stupid questions, so I feel a bit ashamed of that. Anyway I have to learn. But the first time it was a shock.
- Facilitator: What was a shock?
- Female: Because I'm the only one who never had work experience and everyone has.
- Facilitator: So they are mature age students?
- Female: Yes – even the work experience.
- Facilitator: Anyone else have a similar problem?
- Female: In my faculty course when I went to my classroom, it is very obvious – there are three groups, Asian people we all sit on one side ...

## Side B

- Female: Middle keep to give to for somebody who is late ...
- Facilitator: What about the law faculty?
- Male: Maybe I have a similar experience. Two of my classmates are over 70, so it's a little bit hard to communicate.
- Facilitator: Seventy?
- Male: Yes, 70.
- Facilitator: Seventeen?
- Male: Seventy, seven zero. So it's a little bit hard to communicate with them. Also they have strong accents and sometimes the teacher cannot understand them. The teacher will ask, what did you say? And they just ... no-one else can understand what they are saying.
- Facilitator: Are they Australian?
- Male: They are Australian native speaker.



Facilitator: Are they successful students?

Male: I haven't had a test so far.

Facilitator: I admire them for studying at such an age.

Male: I think maybe they are a lawyer and he want to have further study.

[People speaking at once]

Male: They can be my grandfather.

Facilitator: How do you think we learn, how do you learn knowledge, do you learn by memorising, do you learn by talking to friends, how do you learn, experience?

Male: Daily life experience, lecture, workshops.

Facilitator: Just by getting up and moving and walking?

Male: Learn some common things.

Facilitator: How do we learn knowledge for university, academic knowledge?

Female: Research.

Male: Lectures.

Facilitator: Memorise, lecture –

Female: Memorise and research. I think we've got a lot of time to research and I think research is the proper ... for our academic study.

Facilitator: Do you like research?

Male: No.

Female: So painful.

Facilitator: Painful?

Female: Yes.

Male: Yes.

Female: Sometimes you can't find the right books that you are looking for.

Male: ... you cannot find ...

[People speaking at once]

- Male: ... research shows a totally different opinion. Sometimes I get confused.
- Male: Yes, I totally agree.
- Male: Before my experience I did ... experience but I thought this way is right sometimes the other research shows all of my experience is wrong ... is difficult, confused.
- Male: I try I really don't like research because actually my major is IT. You don't find some problem in a book, you should design yours.
- Facilitator: Design your own program?
- Male: Your own program. You cannot copy anyone ... your way.
- Facilitator: But don't you get ideas from other people's work?
- Male: But they do not research ... you know how to do that.
- Female: Just a way to show you how to do it –
- Male: Yes, then you work.
- Female: If it depends on the exam if it encourage you to create if your idea will get a higher mark. If you just follow the others –
- Facilitator: Perhaps we should do group work research, teams doing research together. Would this be good?
- Female: Yes.
- Male: Yes.
- Female: It depends on ... somebody will hide what he has found.
- Male: Yes.
- Facilitator: Why?
- Male: Chinese human nature.
- Facilitator: Really, what do you mean?
- Male: Like this whole thing, the teachers only teach you 90% of what you know ... they always keep their last piece, the little final important thing. That's why sometimes things are –

- Facilitator: Is this Chinese style?
- Female: Even ... country.
- Male: Yes ...
- Female: This mean the student cannot be better than the teacher.
- Male: Yes, I think in Asian culture the teachers are experts; the students can never challenge them.
- Male: That's the last thing you keep your power.
- Facilitator: Interesting. Do you think the teachers are giving too much here, they should hold back more?
- Female: No. The lecturer here they just give us the guide first, how to study.
- Facilitator: How to do it?
- Female: Yes, how to do it.
- Facilitator: And you have to do it?
- Female: Yes.
- Male: Yes.
- Facilitator: In your own style?
- Female: Yes ...
- Facilitator: Is that a good way?
- Male: Definitely.
- Female: Yes.
- Male: Depends.
- Facilitator: Depends on what?
- Male: ... deeper knowledge. Like if you are in elementary school or high school you just tell them the knowledge – the group is like a, you don't need how to measure the group ... because tell them how to do it, how to find things, just tell them. I think it becomes a ...
- Male: Different.

- Male: ... yes, different level of education, the different levels.
- Facilitator: On your level what do you think, that they should hold back more, that secret 10%?
- Male: Yeah, maybe – I think people ... you can tell everything yourself because some people will copy your idea. This is most important thing, you should have your own way.
- Male: Your last card.
- Facilitator: This is called intellectual property, your own ideas.
- Male: Yeah.
- Facilitator: Okay. Finally, we've talked about problems with group members, we've talked about teaching style, we've talked about lazy members, we've talked about gaining more ideas from working with friends, adding to our ideas, the advantages of group work to learn more, reflect more, problems of working with other cultures, particularly Muslim cultures you said. Finally, in conclusion, what would you say about interactive peer based learning, what do you gain? When you work with your classmates on a project or an activity, what do you gain?
- Female: I gain from team work, I respect other ideas and listen to them and from the idea we can work out which one is the better.
- Facilitator: Okay, so evaluative thinking.
- Female: Yes.
- Facilitator: Comparing ideas.
- Female: Yeah, and most people respect each other.
- Facilitator: Mutual respect, respect for each other.
- Female: Yes.
- Facilitator: Even if they're from a culture you –
- Female: Yes.
- Male: You are not familiar with.
- Facilitator: Yes, so everyone can communicate very well with. Okay, any

- other ideas?
- Female: Get feedback from them so I gain more knowledge and understand more ... team work.
- Facilitator: Is knowledge socially constructed according to our belief or is it [unclear] knowledge?
- Male: Both.
- Female: Also your critical thinking and analysing skills, improving, to me. I learn more how to analyse this and that because you learn from the other people stuff. They don't really show you directly but you learn from them by reflecting to your own experience.
- Facilitator: By reflecting to your own experience, that's important, isn't it?
- Female: Yes.
- Facilitator: Any other points?
- Female: I think knowledge is what you read or what you listening ...
- Facilitator: So is it socially constructed?
- Male: What do you mean?
- Facilitator: Or is it just that you open a book and read, that's knowledge?
- Female: We say knowledge, discuss knowledge.
- Female: If the knowledge is quite obvious it's okay, but if the knowledge is just one person that person should prove to the others by using books and reference to show ...
- Facilitator: We're back to research again.
- Female: But you don't normally do that. But anyway must prove just in case – or just remember but your mind is not always right, is not always correct. Sometimes it makes you confused so you set that like A like B like ABB so you must prove that.
- Female: For example, Taiwanese saying that their country has a lot of pollution. You may agree on that and then if you were interested in that topic go to database.

Facilitator: Go?

[People speaking at once]

Male: You could find me a picture –

Facilitator: Anybody else want to say anything?

Male: I think sometimes our social construction – I think a book knowledge sometimes is an old social construction knowledge, so they read in a book for the people later to learn from it, so they can learn the past to make it easier. Okay, now we write down the part we all explored, it's easier for the people after us to not thinking the old problems they have met and finally get to just the same answer just make it more productive.

Female: Yes, but sometimes it's update.

Male: It's like we overcame all those barriers and we finally came to this knowledge, put it in a book so the later people can read it and don't have to ...

Male: Research –

Male: Yes, don't have to pass all those barriers again.

Facilitator: But socially constructed knowledge keeps renewing with new groups of people.

Male: Yes, but good knowledge can be written.

Female: That big one, the basic one in a book.

Female: The thing is, it depends on the part you read. Like with books you just want to read part one but I want to read part two.

Facilitator: What's ...

Female: No, I mean that depends on your interest in that.

Facilitator: How does it relate to you?

Female: It depends on how you're interested in the part you want to read.

Male: Yeah.

Female: Sometimes there's more – other point of views, some people

- would say that, the other book would say yes, I agree with [unclear] and then the others would disagree with him. So it depends on which book you choose and you read it.
- Male: Depends on which part you read.
- Female: It's so hard.
- Facilitator: So it depends on which part you choose?
- Male: Yes.
- Female: That's all called study.
- Facilitator: Any other points?
- Male: Yes, in law faculty while the teacher said law has two parts, rules and cases. Rules are on the book but they are rubbish. The most important thing is the cases ... all cases you can be a good lawyer, if you can know all the rules you have failed.
- Facilitator: So it's not just theory –
- Male: No ... all you want to know is the experience of others, the cases.
- Facilitator: How will your experience at QUT change you for the future?
- Male: [Inaudible]
- Facilitator: University for the real world.
- Female: Yes, I heard that, everyone said that if – the entrance to UQ is easier but you can easy to pass the final exam, you graduate. But here it is easier to get entrance but it's quite hard for you to pass, graduate.
- Male: UQ is hard to -?
- Male: Hard to enter, easier to graduate.
- Male: Here is -?
- Male: Easy to enter –
- Male: Hard to graduate.
- Male: Yes, so [a trap].
- Facilitator: All of you are here, you must have chosen easier to enter, hard to

graduate.

Male: Sometimes it's because we couldn't enter UQ. I think for me with Taiwanese parents they think UQ is the best ... subject, UQ is the best; QUT is second in Brisbane. If not those two maybe Griffith – maybe, or you go back to Taiwan.

Female: Really?

Male: Yes. So it's plan B.

Facilitator: Aren't you happy at QUT?

Female: I am.

Male: Yes.

Male: We don't care that much about it, but parents they have this traditional thinking that UQ is the best.

Female: So you had to be flexible.

Female: It depends on the faculty, like here ...

Male: It doesn't matter –

Female: They don't care.

Female: But everyone says that a business degree here is better than UQ.

Male: Maybe QUT's IT is better than UQ, but it doesn't matter, just go to UQ, IT is okay.

Male: Parents opinion, we just have a lovely life in QUT, that's okay.

Facilitator: I think every university has a specialty and it may be a little bit better than some of the other universities. IT is quite good here, nursing is quite good here, business is very good here.

Male: But UQ is more known so they think after school you go to those companies, they say okay, UQ – okay QUT.

Facilitator: QUT has a good name –

Female: Because maybe UQ has a good relationship with the government, Australian government, so a lot of Australia scholarship UQ and they recommend for example, Vietnamese person. My husband



- three years ago had to apply to UQ because UQ is the university that Australia government recommended.
- Male: UQ has higher world rank.
- Female: One hundred –
- Male: One hundred – 150.
- Male: [Inaudible]
- Male: No, 100 – 150, they don't rank, they just ...
- Facilitator: What's QUT?
- Female: That's QUT. I just read the rank, it's 150.
- Facilitator: QUT?
- Female: [Unclear] 390 –
- Female: Really, this year?
- Female: This is last year, we went up hundred and something, because I was told –
- Female: No, no, it cannot be 100 –
- Female: Even UQ just 150 –
- Female: Probably business faculty, because ...
- Female: No, the rank of university.
- Male: It influence that Asian people they can see the university –
- Male: The reputation, the rank.
- Male: I don't think it's just Asian they also rank?
- Male: In Asian terms they love America, America is the best place to go If you want to study abroad.
- Facilitator: But you didn't go there?
- Male: For me I don't like America. I think people all have guns. I went to America once –
- Facilitator: A bit dangerous.
- Male: Yes, a bit dangerous.

- Facilitator: Anyone else like to say anything about learning, a little bit off the track there, anything else?
- Male: In my case I used to work two years, so I don't know how to assess the other people's opinion or the other people's ...
- Female: [Inaudible]
- Male: Yes, I didn't have any idea how to assess their, hard to contact on the business.
- Facilitator: I'm not sure I understand?
- Female: You mean communicate with other people?
- Male: Yes, I don't know how to communicate with OPs ... because my bachelor was engineering, so I don't know how to do it on the business – I'm doing business ... my engineering knowledge and the business skills in the future ... must be better.
- Facilitator: I think it's a good combination. Did you want to say something, Ken?
- Ken: Yes. Because this week I just finish my discussion, this Monday, I think you know, and I think I learned how to be a leader. Because we don't have any chance to be a leader in school but ... I know how to be a leader and how to encourage [your member].
- Facilitator: That's great, it's a good exercise. Anyone else like to say anything?
- Female: For me I think I learn about encourage my classmates, my group because I have experience of sales and marketing in the group, but I don't have experience about to get their ideas and to correct their working in the group. So I think that is better for me to have experience.
- Facilitator: Practical.
- Female: Real world.
- Male: It helped me to realise that maybe I have more leadership talent than [unclear] – because I am usually the one who ...

Male: [Inaudible]

Facilitator: Because he's eating so many chocolates.

Male: Too hyper? Always in a group, like there are always quiet people, I'm always the one who –

Female: Encourage them.

Male: Encourage them or giving them orders to – or [divide a job].

Facilitator: What did you learn from this experience?

Male: About how to divide work.

Facilitator: You learned leadership skills?

Male: Yes, and how to divide work.

Facilitator: And delegate.

Male: Yes ... their specialties. Last time we have done something about get in [little groups], there are members who are good at maths, so I ask them to do the maths part and I can do the...

Female: You know how to give a job to the right person?

Male: Actually it just shows who is good at which part. Maths people just started calculating.

Facilitator: That's interesting, anything else?

Female: I learn from what I lack of.

Facilitator: What you lack?

Female: I am patient and commitment, discipline –

Male: Control?

Female: Control, what do you mean by control?

Male: Control by myself or control of other group members.

Female: I don't think control is good word to describe group discussion. I mean you can't control them but you share and integrates –

Male: You help them.

Female: You don't control, you can't control people.

- Male: Sometimes we should do, like lazy people.
- Female: No, encouragement is the word. If you control them you don't teach them how to grow up – they still are kids if you control them.
- Male: Yeah, I used to do group presentation in my faculty but one South American, actually he is so lazy also has a lot of excuse. She keeps on [meeting]. So after that our leader, our team leader, he control her, he had to control him and call every time. Or he checked, did you do that, did you do that, why not –
- Female: That's discipline.
- Male: Yes.
- Facilitator: So discipline, self-discipline. Do you find group work makes you motivated, more motivated?
- Female: Yes.
- Male: Yes.
- Facilitator: Mostly?
- Male: Yes.
- Female: Yes, and it's also fun.
- Female: And I can learn the effect of the others I think.
- Facilitator: All right, I think we'll end there. Last chance for any other comments. We've been talking for a long time and I really appreciate your ideas. Thank you very much.

**END OF TRANSCRIPT**